



We the People THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION

Directed by the Center for Civic Education and funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Education for Democracy Act approved by the United States Congress.

SCORING CRITERIA DESCRIPTIONS

UNDERSTANDING

This criterion assesses how well students demonstrate their comprehension of the various historical and contemporary issues associated with each question, including the main question, subquestions, and judges' follow-up questions.

CONSTITUTIONAL APPLICATION

This criterion focuses on how students demonstrate their knowledge of the history and principles of the Constitution. Is their information accurate? Do they cite constitutional principles and examples from constitutional history when appropriate?

REASONING

This criterion focuses on the extent to which students' arguments reflect logical and critical thinking. To support their conclusions, students should do more than provide examples; they should also explain why the example is relevant to their argument. This is the category from which points should be deducted if students present opinions or beliefs without reasons or explanations.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

This criterion focuses on the evidence, examples, and/or illustrations presented by students in support of their positions. The top-rated groups will provide ample support for their positions, and that support will be appropriate and accurate.

RESPONSIVENESS

This criterion focuses on the extent to which students fully address the main question, subquestions, and judges' follow-up questions. For example, a response might be eloquently reasoned and adequately supported and still not address the question asked. This is the category from which points should be deducted when students are determined to present information they have prepared even if the question has not been asked.

PARTICIPATION

This criterion focuses on group participation. If most members speak they should be rated higher than those in which one or two "star" students dominate the entire 10 minutes. It is reasonable for one or two students to make the opening statement, but the other students should attempt to answer the follow-up questions.

We recognize that some students have an especially difficult time speaking in public. Since our competition requires that whole classes compete, we recommend that a group not be penalized for having one or two students who do not participate much because of extreme shyness, language problems, or other limitations. In rating participation, you should consider the extent to which most students participate.

Note that there is no "Appearance" criterion. Students have been informed that regular school clothes are appropriate for all competition activities. Although students who wish to dress more formally may do so, we do not want anyone to feel obligated to purchase clothes specifically for this event.